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INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF RURAL WOMEN ON FAMILY PLANNING IN EPE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAGOS.

ABSTRACT

This research work examined the information seeking behaviour of rural women on Family Planning in Epe Local Government, Lagos State. Survey research method was adopted. The sample size of the study was one hundred and fifty respondents (120). The instrument used to gather relevant information was questionnaire. Also pilot survey was carried out to ensure validity and reliability of the instrument, the data analysis method used was simple frequency count, percentage and correlation. Result of the findings was discussed and conclusions made.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Information is considered to be an essential part of every human being's existence. Information is a basic need of life which helps in the fulfilment of other needs such as food and shelter. Therefore it can be said that without information, survival and development of any community is not possible. Information Seeking is an essential human activity. It is as old as the human race. Early people looked for information to hunt, fish, and farm and to protect themselves. Currently, "it is still an important part of human activities, ranging from decision making and problem solving through resource allocation and system management" (Prekop, 2002). Information Seeking Behaviour can be described as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating and development. Information Seeking is also an essential activity in the academic environment. It is associated with every task faculty perform, such as teaching, research and service. The emerging tools of the information age allow individuals to search for, obtain, integrate, analyze, evaluate, experience, and create new information with greater ease and timeliness than at any time in the past. (Swan and Hicks, 2007) Information seeking behaviour is a broad term which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, and finally uses this information to satisfy his/her information needs. Various factors may determine the information seeking behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals. It is, therefore, desirable to understand the purpose for which information is required, the environment in which the user operates users' skills in identifying the needed information, channels and sources preferred for acquiring information, and barriers to information. Information seeking behaviour that results from recognition of some need (Wilson, 1981) is defined by Kriekelas (1983, p. 6-7) as any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a feeling that the current state of possessed knowledge is less than that needed to deal with some issue (or problem). Rural women are known for their primitive

activities particularly agriculture. Most times, creating time to seek for information particularly on family planning is often regarded as a waste of time that could have contributed to more agricultural produce. Therefore, rural women tend to produce more children than usual. This study is intended to examining the information seeking behaviour of rural women in relation to family planning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rate at which rural women give birth is very alarming. Child spacing is not a factor to be considered in child bearing. Giving the various modern method of family planning, do the rural women not aware of the methods or they do not bother to know about the methods?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this research work is to examine the information seeking behaviour of rural women on family planning. The specific objectives include:

1. To identify the information needs of rural women.
2. To identify their sources of information regarding family planning.
3. To examine their information seeking behaviour.
4. To identify possible barriers to information-seeking by rural women.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Saleh and Lasisi (2011) carried out a study on the information seeking behaviour of rural women in Borno State, Nigeria. The findings of their research showed that the sources of information available to the rural women include both formal and informal sources. The most preferred source of information for the rural women in Borno State is the informal source as they rely on information gotten from friends, relatives, husband, children and fellow market women.

Ukachi (2007) undertook a study on the information needs, sources and Information seeking behaviour of rural women in Badagry, Lagos, Nigeria. The findings revealed that

93.5% of rural women in Badagry need information on fertilizers and seeds. Similarly, Nwagwu and Ajama (2011) carried out a study on Women's health information needs and information sources in a rural oil palm business community in South- Western Nigeria. The findings showed that the most frequently mentioned health information need is malaria with 85.4% of respondents.

Mooko (2005) investigated information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural, uneducated women and their families in three villages in Botswana. She found that most information needs are health-related, such as information regarding certain diseases, how they are contacted, and treated.

Hossain & Islam (2012) studied information needs of rural women in three villages of Bangladesh. It shows that Bangladesh Rural women need information on agriculture, food and nutrition, livestock, health, family planning, child education, etc. Women in rural areas of Bangladesh are highly dependent on their friends and neighbours to get the information they need in their daily lives.

Ahmad (2011) carried out a study on the Information Seeking Behaviours of Rural Women in Malaysia. This study reveals that the women in Malaysia are concerned with information needs related to food and child education. Dasgupta (2004) conducted a study on users and non-users of information in rural areas in India. The study tries to examine the information needs of the rural communities. The needs identified included income generation, community leadership, environmental issues like pollution, climatic change, disasters, etc., community health, literacy support, educational opportunities, employment, bank loans, government policies, transportation, communication and sanitation.

Zhang and Yu (2009) discussed the major research studies conducted on rural information needs and acquisition in China. They concluded that rural dwellers in China have an extensive range of information needs, with agricultural technology, market information,

income generation and policy information being the most needed types; they further reported that rural dwellers in China rely on interpersonal relationships for acquiring both general information and information for agriculture production.

Iqbal, Yousaf and Soroya (2013) carried out a study of the information need and seeking behaviour of rural women in Soon Valley, Pakistan, which shows that the factors that poses barrier to the accessibility of information by rural women includes; less resource as there is no single public library in that area and lack of time among others.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study is a descriptive survey design. This method helps to have a generalized perspective of the respondents on the subject of the study. Besides, survey studies help to involve more participants' time at a generalized level. The study area of this research covers rural women at villages in Epe local Government Area of Lagos State. 120 respondents will be questioned using a well structured questionnaire. The research instrument adopted for this study is structured closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire addresses the information seeking behaviour of rural women on family planning. The questionnaires will be administered in persons by the researcher to the respondents in their various locations. This approach is effective, easy and appropriate because it helps to have face to face contact with the respondents and allows opportunity to explain the focus of the study to the respondents. Data analysis will be done through simple frequency counts, percentage distribution and correlation matrix with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version.

RESULTS

Table 4.1: Age distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
16-20	23	20.5
21-30yrs	29	25.9
31-40yrs	16	14.3
41-50yrs	32	28.6
50yrs and above	12	10.7
Total	112	100.0

Table 4.1 reveals that 28.6% of the respondent's claim that their age is between 41 – 50years, 25.9% are between age 21 – 30years; 20.5% are between age 16-20years; 14.3% are between age 31 – 40years the remaining 10.7% are 50years and above. This table indicate that majority of the respondents are between age 41 -50years.

Table 4.2: Educational background of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	14	12.5
Non formal education	21	18.7
Primary school	28	25.0
Secondary school	34	30.4
Tertiary	15	13.4
Total	112	100.0

The above table 4.2 shows the educational background of the respondents. It indicates that 30.4% has secondary school certificate; 25.0% has primary school education; 18.7% are non-formal education; 13.4% has tertiary education while the remaining 12.5% constitutes the illiterates. This implies that majority of the respondents can read and write and has the knowledge on the subject matter.

Table 4.3: Marital status of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Married	64	57.1
Single	34	30.4
Divorce	5	4.5
Widow	9	8.0
Total	112	100.0

Table 2 shows that married has the highest percentage of 57.1% of the respondents, 30.4% were single, 8.0% are widow while divorce constitute the least 4.5%. The result indicates that majority of the respondents are married.

Table 4.4: Occupation distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Housewife	14	12.5
Student	12	10.7
Agriculture/farming	36	32.2
Trading/business	28	25.0
Teacher	22	19.6
Total	112	100.0

From the table above, 32.2% of the respondents are into agriculture/farming; 25.0% are into trading/business; 19.6% are teacher; 12.5% are housewife while 10.7% are students. This result implies that majority of the rural women are into farming.

Table 4.5: Number of children

	Frequency	Percent
1-2 children	10	8.9
3-4 children	27	24.1
5-6 children	51	45.5
More than 6 children	24	21.4
Total	112	100.0

The frequency analysis on the number of children shows that 45.5% of the respondents have 5 – 6 children; 24.1% have 3 – 4 children; 21.4% have more than 6 children while 8.9% have 1 – 2 children.

Table 4.6: Level of satisfaction in using the relation to family planning

	Frequency	Percent
Highly satisfied	4	3.6
Moderately satisfied	41	36.6
Partially satisfied	64	57.1
Fully satisfied	3	2.7
Total	112	100.0

Table 4.6 above shows that majority of the respondents 57.1% are partially satisfied, 36.6% are moderately satisfied; 3.6% are highly satisfied and 2.7% are fully satisfied.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question I

What are the information needs of rural women?

Table 4.7: Information needs of rural women

	Frequency	Percent
Finance	21	18.8
Child education	47	42.0
Religion	2	1.8
Food	3	2.7
Health	34	30.4
Hobbies	4	3.6
International issues	1	.9
Total	112	100.0

Table 4.7 reveals the information needs of the rural women. The result shows that 42.0% of the rural women claim that they need information on child education, 30.4% claimed health information; 18.8% claimed finance. The result implies that major information needs of rural women are child education.

Research Question II

What are the various sources of information by rural women regarding family planning?

Table 4.8: Source of information the rural women use in relation to family planning

	Frequency	Percent
Radio	44	39.3
Television	22	19.6
Neighbours/friends	4	3.6
Health officials	33	29.5
Handbills/posters	6	5.4
Newspaper	3	2.7
Total	112	100.0

Source of information in relation to family planning by the rural women shows that 39.3% of the respondents' source their information through radio, 29.5% claimed that their sources of information are from the health officials; 19.6% claimed through television programmes. The result indicates that majority of the rural women sources information about family planning through radio programmes.

Research question III

What are the various activities engaging in by rural women towards searching for information about family planning?

Table 4.9: Activities engaging in by rural women towards searching for information about family planning

S/N		Strongly agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1.	I often listen to health related programmes on the radio.	63 (56.3%)	19 (17.0%)	22 (19.6%)	8 (7.1%)	3.22	1.00
2.	I like discussing health related issues with my friends and neighbours especially family planning.	74 (66.1%)	21 (18.8%)	14 (12.5%)	3 (2.7%)	3.48	0.82
3.	I always attend health talk by health workers.	69 (61.6%)	25 (22.3%)	14 (12.5%)	4 (3.6%)	3.41	0.84

4.	I visit clinic often to find out about new family planning method.	13 (11.6%)	13 (11.6%)	61 (54.5%)	25 (22.3%)	2.12	0.89
5.	I don't bother about family planning education.	66 (58.9%)	19 (17.0%)	11 (9.8%)	16 (14.3%)	2.17	0.82
6.	I read newspaper everyday so as to learn more about family planning.	8 (7.1%)	19 (17.0%)	65 (58.0%)	20 (17.9%)	2.13	0.78
7.	I do not care about limiting the number of children I want to have.	5 (4.5%)	16 (14.3%)	74 (66.1%)	17 (15.2%)	2.08	0.68
8.	I make sure that I watch health related programmes especially teachings on family planning on television.	14 (12.5%)	23 (20.5%)	62 (55.4%)	13 (11.6%)	3.19	1.05
9.	I often make efforts to get and read handbills on family planning.	58 (51.8%)	28 (25.0%)	14 (12.5%)	12 (10.7%)	3.17	1.02
10	I attend lectures on family planning each time such lecture is organized by health workers.	64 (57.1%)	25 (22.3%)	10 (8.9%)	13 (11.6%)	3.25	1.03

Table 4.9 reveals that 73.3% of the respondents agreed on 'item 1' that 'I often listen to health related programmes on the radio' while the remaining 26.7% disagreed (mean =3.22, SD = 1.00). 84.9% agreed on 'item 2' that 'I like discussing health related issues with my friends and neighbours especially family planning.' while 15.1% disagreed (mean = 3.48, SD = 0.82). Also, on 'item 3', 83.9% agreed that 'I always attend health talk by health workers' while 16.1% disagreed on the opinion (Mean=3.41, SD = 0.84). On 'item 4', 23.2% of the respondents agreed that 'I visit clinic often to find out about new family planning method.' while 76.8% of the respondents disagree on the opinion with (mean =2.12, SD = 0.82); 75.9% of the respondents agreed on item 5 that 'I don't bother about family planning education' while 24.1% disagreed on the opinion (mean=2.17, SD = 0.82).

More so, on item 6, 24.1% of the respondents agreed that 'I read newspaper everyday so as to learn more about family planning.' while 75.9% disagreed (mean = 2.13, SD = 0.78), 18.8% agreed on item 7 that 'I do not care about limiting the number of children I want to have.' while 81.2% disagreed on the opinion (mean=2.08, SD=0.68). 33% of the respondent agreed that 'I make sure that I watch health related programmes especially teachings on family planning on television.' while 67% disagreed (mean = 3.19, SD = 1.05); 37.5% agreed that 'I often make efforts to get and read handbills on family planning' while 62.5% disagreed (mean=3.17, SD=1.02), lastly on item 10, 79.4% agreed that 'I attend lectures on family planning each time such lecture is organized by health workers' while 20.6% disagreed (mean=3.25, SD=1.03).

Research question IV

What are the possible barriers to information-seeking by rural women?

Table 4.10: Barriers to information-seeking by rural women

S/N		Strongly agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1.	High rate of illiteracy	58 (51.8%)	22 (19.6%)	17 (15.2%)	15 (13.4%)	3.09	1.09
2.	Inability to access formal channels of information due to poverty	63 (56.3%)	20 (17.9%)	25 (22.3%)	4 (3.6%)	3.26	0.92
3.	Lack of adequate and efficient information delivery mechanism	60 (53.6%)	28 (25.0%)	17 (15.2%)	7 (6.3%)	3.25	0.93
4.	Lack of time.	67 (59.8%)	21 (18.8%)	14 (12.5%)	10 (8.9%)	3.27	0.95
5.	Language barrier.	64 (57.1%)	21 (18.8%)	21 (18.8%)	6 (5.4%)	0.32	1.10
6.	Ignorance of governments responsibilities to its citizens	65 (58.0%)	16 (14.3%)	18 (16.1%)	13 (11.6%)	3.19	1.09
7.	Scepticism of the rural woman towards government and its information agencies	64 (57.1%)	21 (18.8%)	11 (9.8%)	16 (14.3%)	3.19	1.10
8.	Attitude of health workers towards effective rural information service	56 (50.0%)	28 (25.0%)	19 (17.0%)	9 (8.0%)	3.17	0.98

The result on the possible barriers to information-seeking by rural women reveals 71.4% agree on item 1 “High rate of illiteracy” while 28.6% disagree with (Mean= 3.09, SD = 1.09). On Item 2, 74.2% agreed that “Inability to access formal channels of information due to poverty” while 25.8% disagreed with (Mean= 3.26, SD = 0.92); 78.6% agreed on item 3 that “Lack of adequate and efficient information delivery mechanism” is the barrier while 21.4% disagreed(mean = 3.25, SD= 0.93). Also on item 4, 78.6% agreed that the barrier is “Lack of time” while 21.4% disagreed on the opinion with(Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.95).75.9% agreed on item 5 “Language barrier” while 24.1% disagreed(Mean = 3.32; SD=1.10).

Moreso, on item 6 “Ignorance of governments responsibilities to its citizens”72.3% agreed on the opinion while 27.7% disagreed with (Mean = 3.19; SD = 1.10); on item 7, “Scepticism of the rural woman towards government and its information agencies”75.9% agreed on the opinion while 24.1% disagreed with (Mean = 3.19; SD = 1.09). Lastly on item 8, “Attitude of health workers towards effective rural information service” 75.0% agreed on the opinion while 25.0% disagreed (Mean = 3.17; SD = 0.98).

Reliability test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha ^a	N of Items
.780	18

The reliability test 0.78 implies that the construction of the questionnaire is reliable since it is greater than 0.6.

CONCLUSION

Based on the outcome of the analysis of this study, the following conclusions were reached;

- Majority of the respondents did not attend higher education and this often affects their behaviour towards information seeking particularly information related to family planning.
- Majority of the women have had more than four children. This shows that the respondents lack knowledge of family planning.
- Majority of the respondents wish to limit the number of children they have if they could be giving the required information and knowledge.
- High rate of illiteracy, inability to access formal channels of information due to poverty, lack of adequate and efficient information delivery mechanism and language barrier are regarded as major problems affecting information seeking behaviour of rural women in the study area.

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